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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *May* the 23d, 1754.

——Ille potens ſui
Lætuſque degit, cui licet in diem
Dixiſſe, VIXI: *cras vel atrâ*
Nube polum Pater occupato,
Vel ſole puro: non tamen irritum
Quodcunque retro eſt, efficiet.——

HOR.

IT was the ſaying of Epaminondas, upon being aſked which of all his friends he eſteemed moſt, that "they "muſt all die before ſuch a queſtion "could be anſwered." But if Epaminondas had lived in this country and in theſe times, he would have known that the greateſt heroes at their deaths, are frequently thoſe who have been the greateſt villains in their lives. And yet moſt men are apt

apt to think like Epaminondas, and to paſs their judgments upon a man's life from what he has ſaid and acted in the laſt ſcene of it; that ſeaſon being thought the ſeaſon of ſincerity, becauſe diſſimulation is to no purpoſe, and becauſe the conſcience finds eaſe in diſcloſing crimes which can no longer profit us, and which threaten us with deſtruction in the ſtate to which we are haſtening, unleſs truly confeſſed and repented of in this. But of thoſe who die in their beds, as well as malefactors, I have known and heard of many debauched and diſſolute men who have met death with the utmoſt patience and reſignation; while the pious and moral chriſtian, whoſe life has been ſpent in the conſtant exerciſe of religion and virtue, has beheld it's approaches with confuſion; and from a conſciouſneſs of not having done exactly as he ought to have done upon every occaſion, has died fearful and deſponding.

From hence it will appear that thoſe who judge of men's lives by their behaviour at their deaths, will be ſometimes miſtaken. The contempt of death may be owing in many to inſenſibility; in ſome to a brutal courage; in others to the diſlike of life; in a few to philoſophy, as well as in many to a well-grounded hope of a happy hereafter. The jeſt of ſir Thomas Moore upon the ſcaffold, who after laying his head upon the block, bad the executioner ſtay till he had put aſide his beard, becauſe *that* had committed no treaſon, was no more a proof of the goodneſs of his life (if there had been no other voucher) than that of the murderer at the gallows, who entreated the hangman not to touch his neck with his fingers, becauſe he was tickliſh. The thief, for the reputation of dying hard, as it is called, and the philoſopher, to ſupport the doctrine he has taught, that death

death is no evil, will ruſh into eternity with an affected bravery, and offend Heaven rather than confeſs their apprehenſions of diſſolution.

MEN are ſometimes hypocrites in their laſt moments through pride, as they have been all their lives through intereſt; nor will it appear ſtrange that they are ſo: for as every man is deſirous (if it can be done without much trouble) of leaving a good name behind him, he is unwilling to confeſs at his death that he has been a rogue all his life. Upon principles like theſe have the worſt of criminals gone to the gallows with as much triumph and exultation, as the martyrs of old did to the ſtake for the cauſe of Heaven and religion.

FOR my own part (and I hope it will not be imputed to me as preſumption) I ſhould think of death with much greater terror than I do, if I conſidered it as the final end of being. The thought of annihilation to one whoſe life has not been marked with any of the capital vices, and whoſe frailties, he humbly hopes, are no more than thoſe which are incident to humanity; who has been unprofitable to his MAKER becauſe he was human, and to mankind becauſe unfriended by fortune; and whoſe connections in this life have been ſuch as to make him deſirous of their eternal duration; I ſay, to one who thus thinks, and who hopes he has thus lived, the thought of annihilation would make death moſt terrible. And yet in the circle of my own acquaintance, I have found a man of a decent life and converſation, who wiſhed well to everybody, and who loved and enjoyed his friends, but who, through a tedious and painful illneſs, had conceived ſleep to be ſo great a bleſſing as to make him wiſh for an eternity of it;

it; and having taken pains to believe that death was ſuch a ſleep, he talked of it with pleaſure, and within a very few hours of his exit, as a confirmation that he died in the opinion he had profeſſed, he wrote the following epitaph upon himſelf, and directed it to a friend with his own hand.

Beneath this ſtone, to worms a prey,
(Himſelf as poor and vile as they)
EUGENIO *lies, in hopes of* REST,
Who deem'd all farther hope a jeſt:
Who ne'er on fancy's wings could riſe
To heav'n-built domes above the ſkies;
Content from whence he ſprung to lie,
Nor wiſh'd to live, nor fear'd to die.

I SHALL only obſerve upon the writer of this epitaph, that as I believe him to have been honeſt and ſincere, it is but charity to hope that he is now rejoicing in his miſtake.

THERE is nothing more true in the general, than that thoſe people are the moſt averſe to death, who have had the leaſt enjoyment of life; as on the contrary, thoſe who have enjoyed life moſt, have been the leaſt anxious about dying. To many of my readers ſuch an aſſertion as this may appear ſtrange and unaccountable: but a very little enquiry will convince them of the fact.

MEN who, through neceſſitous circumſtances, gloomy diſpoſitions, or ſickly habits of body, have lived in perpetual diſcontent, are apt to flatter themſelves that life is in arrears to them; that as their days have hitherto paſſed without enjoyment, every thing is to be made up to them before they come to die. They look upon riches,

riches, pleaſure and health to be bleſſings that never tire, and conſider the poſſeſſors of them as living in a ſtate of uninterrupted happineſs, which they long to taſte, and cannot bear the thoughts of dying before they have enjoyed. Thus are the miſerable in love with life, and afraid of death. Hope ſtill flatters them with happy days; and death that would inevitably cut off that hope, is beheld by them as the cruelleſt of all enemies.

LET us caſt an eye now to thoſe in happier ſituations; to thoſe who are contented with their lot, and who (if there are any ſuch) have lived all their days in health, chearfulneſs and affluence. What can to-morrow bring to ſuch as theſe that they have not known before, unleſs it be misfortune? It is from this conſideration that ſuch perſons are more reſigned to dying. We part more eaſily with what we poſſeſs, than with our expectations of what we wiſh for: the reaſon of it is, that what we expect is always greater than what we enjoy. And hence it is that the enjoyment of life makes us leſs deſirous of it's continuance, than if it had hitherto given us nothing, and fed us only with expectation.

I HAVE waved in this place all conſiderations of a future exiſtence, and have conſidered the happy and unhappy only in regard to this life. If we take religion and a future ſtate into the queſtion, the happy here will have a thouſand times ſtronger reaſons for being reſigned to death than the unhappy. Pain, ſickneſs and misfortune, as they do not wean us from a love of life, ſo neither do they beget in us a proper frame and temper to prepare for death. It is the enjoyment of life that calls forth our gratitude to HIM who gave it; that opens the heart to acts of kindneſs and benevolence: and by giving us a taſte here of the happineſs of Heaven, excites in us a

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